

CDC confirms 1st reported case of HIV transmission through kiss

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Scientists reiterated their warning that HIV-infected people should avoid deep kissing after a report that a man with bleeding gums apparently transmitted the virus to a woman through a kiss.

It was the first reported case of HIV transmission through a kiss, but the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention emphasized that the virus was transmitted via the man's blood, not his saliva. There are no reported cases of people becoming infected with the AIDS virus through saliva.

The CDC said the case is the very reason why, beginning in 1986, they started cautioning couples against deep kissing if one of them has the

AIDS virus: the possibility of bleeding gums — not saliva.

"It's not likely, but we believe it can happen," said Dr. Scott Holmberg, a CDC medical epidemiologist.

The man and woman had gum disease and poor oral hygiene. He had bad breath and hairlike growths on his tongue, a symptom that sometimes plagues people with the AIDS virus, the CDC said. Her gum disease had weakened and thinned her gums, making it easier for the virus to get into her blood.

The man's gums often bled when he brushed and flossed his teeth. The couple usually had sex and kissed at night after he brushed, the CDC said.

The couple said they always used a condom during sex.

Atlanta

By Maria Saporta
and Henry Unger
STAFF WRITERS

Atlanta's largest convention may be leaving the turn of the century.

The Super Show, goods trade show that more than 100,000 and pumps \$80 million local economy each will decide in the months whether to new city by 2000, either rarely or permanently.

"We are actively other locations," said Riddle, president of the Goods Manufacturing Association, which puts on the Show. "We have to.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Black Lesbians and Gays Speak Out

Part 1 of a
2-part series



Three men and three women from Atlanta talk about the challenges and rewards of being both African-American and lesbian or gay. Pictured from top to bottom are: Pat Hussain, Craig Washington, Badili Jones, Hubert Alexander, Wendi O'Neal and Cherry Hussain.

Atlanta—More often than not, the contributions of African-Americans to this country's history and culture—past and present—go unnoticed. The designation of February as Black History Month is an attempt to correct at least some of that omission. But clearly, a single month (and as Pat Hussain points out in this article, the shortest one at that) is not enough.

Without an historical basis for understanding the African-American experience, the white community cannot grasp even a small piece of what it is to be black in America, let alone black and gay or lesbian. In an attempt to bridge some of that gap, on February 2 Southern Voice convened a "round table" of six African-American lesbians and gay men, living in Atlanta, to discuss their lives and their experiences.

As a reporter, I have spoken to these three men and three women frequently about the "hot topics" of the day. But this time, my job was just to listen. I am honored to have heard the stories, to learn a little bit more

where we are the same, where we differ, and why a recognition of these things is so important.

KC WILDMOON

The participants in the discussion include Cherry and Pat Hussain, well-known community activists. Cherry is 40, born in Daytona Beach and raised in Thomasville, Georgia. Pat, 45, is an Atlanta native. She is the co-director of Southerners On New Ground, former co-chair of the Olympics Out of Cobb Coalition, board secretary of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, former director of outreach of the '93 March on Washington, and a self-described "pissed-off black dyke from Georgia."

Badili Jones is a 38-year-old former priest, member of the African American Lesbian and Gay Alliance, Latinos en Accion, and Second Sunday, and runs Southern Voice's front office.

Hubert Alexander, 36, is a co-founder of the Atlanta chapter of Digital Queers and the newly hired executive administrator of the Atlanta Lesbian and

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'a man of no



Albert Finney turns in a touching performance as a middle-aged bus conductor struggling to guide his life, guided only by his affinity for Oscar Wilde. The film, which opens in Atlanta Feb. 24. P

Pride hires first paid

Atlanta—The Atlanta Lesbian and Gay Pride Committee has reached a milestone for the city's lesbian/gay community—the annual Pride celebration organizers have hired the Committee's first paid consultant to manage its day-to-day business.

Longtime Pride volunteer and board member Hubert Alexander is now the Pride Committee's executive administrator, charged with handling the operational aspects of the celebration.

"The board started planning for this three years ago," said Alexander, who started his new position on Feb. 1. "This frees the board to do the long-term stuff."

Pride co-chair Rich said that the financial success of the 1993 Pride celebration has put the Committee in debt for t-shirts—wrote up call for the board. In consultation with other Pride organizations across the country, the Atlanta-based Non source Center, the board is working down a very specific plan, and the work plan.

"Last year when all was done, we had about \$10,000 in the bank," he said. "We were after [paying the

Hiring a day-to-day administrator was the next step. Alexander will work

Black Lesbians and Gays Speak Out

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Gay Pride Committee.

Craig Washington is 35, the African American Outreach Coordinator at AID Atlanta, and a member of Second Sunday, the AIDS Research Consortium of Atlanta advisory board, and the statewide HIV pan-ning group.

Wendi O'Neal, 21, is co-chair of Spelman College's Lesbian/Bisexual Alliance. She is a New Orleans native, working in Atlanta as an intern at Amnesty International.

The group began the discussion by naming their heroes, and took off from there.

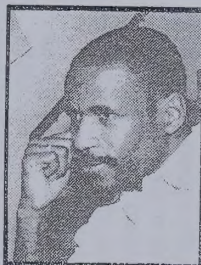
Cherry: My hero is my brother Lucius. There was ten of us, and I was the last child. My brother Lucius was my guardian. He bathed me, he took care of me.

Pat: One of my heroes is Bessie Smith. In 1939, for Columbia Records, she recorded "Hell Diving Women." And I thought, "go girl. Put it out there." And she and women like her that were singing out their lives, long before there was anything resembling lesbian chic or the Harlem Renaissance.

Craig: My mother. In terms of my gay heroes, James Baldwin, Audre Lorde because they said so many things not following a political agenda, very much believing

in honesty and certain truths. And Aretha Franklin.

Hubert: Zora Hurston. She's from my father's hometown, Eatonville, Florida. In fact, my father's in one of her books. And my sister [who is in the military]. I should list Phill Wilson here. He's somebody who is working so hard for our community.



Hubert Alexander

Hubert: My mother raised us by herself. I don't think she ever let us know how difficult it was. And then I think in terms of heroes, James Baldwin and Bessie Smith—regular folks who have the courage to come out in the midst of dealing with homophobia, racism and so forth, and do it with integrity.

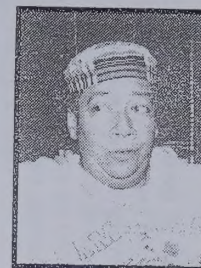
Wendi: Well, I have to say both my mother and my father. And Pat [Hussain]. One of my inspirations is Bernice Johnson Reagon. I love her.

Craig: Oh, Sweet Honey period. [At] the Black Arts Festival...there was serious

claiming of spaces we couldn't before. I was at one of the literary panels where [poet Amiri] Baraka and some of the old school were. A good friend, Jabari, was with me. There was a point where Baraka and some of his contemporaries were fuming about there being an Audre Lorde panel, and they made some offhand reference to it. And there was a point where it was too much, and Jabari stood up and spoke to the sexism of it, the misogyny. We all got up and started naming names...Langston Hughes, Sonia Sanchez...After that people were saying we are here, we are a part of this, we have always been a part of the arts movement, an integral part.

Badili: There wouldn't be a Black Arts Festival without us. You know, I would love to see a Black Gay and Lesbian History Project to show how much black gays and lesbians have put into the arts. This would be for the prominent black gays and lesbians in our community who are not out. My favorite expression is the glass closet. You don't hurt anybody but yourself. Everybody can see you in that closet. And I think if we had this history project, and really emphasized the litany of men and women from our history who were out there in politics, economics, sports, whatever people would see they were integral to the black community.

Pat: Well, it's February. We're looking at Black History Month. The shortest month of the year. It's a coincidence, right? And then when you look at the gay community, and this is a very sore point with me, is that we have seen something that's unprecedented in modern history. We've seen black South Africa take its place. We have seen a man stand up and say "We will put sexual orientation in our constitution, we will see that gays, lesbians will be respected because



Pat Hussain

they are in our constitution, and we're going to go forward. We're not going backward into retribution."

Now I expect America to overlook this. But I expect the gay and lesbian community, that is focused on freedom,

that is focused on liberation, that's about to have a freedom ride going into Mississippi to say, "Look, America, at what has happened in South Africa." But I think the white gay and lesbian community in this country cannot deal with the fact that white people aren't in power.

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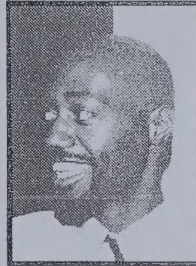
Black Lesbians and Gays Speak Out

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Badili: It is the only country in the world where gays and lesbians have constitutionally guaranteed rights.

Pat: If it had happened in Holland, it would be hanging from every balcony. And it's just gnawing a hole through me because it's like the elephant in the living room — and it's racism. Why have we not looked at what happened in South Africa? There's only one answer to that.

Craig: And we're not looking at what's happening at home. What we perceive as the gay community, it's largely white and male. And, given the history of this country, most white men behave as white men and buy into the racist mythology, and that carries over into every political direction. The possibility of coalition is difficult.



Craig Washington

Pat: Our communities, which includes the white gay and lesbian community, have learned how to say unity, they've learned how to say diversity, but they're missing a word. And that's reciprocity. There is no two way street. You've got white ministers coming into the black community saying "homosexuals are destroying the family. You should be with us because we're pro-family." Now, black folk are saying "where were you when teenage pregnancy became rampant? Where were you when they start shooting on my corner everyday? Where were you when they start throwing our boys in jail?" And the white gay and lesbian community coming in saying "those fundamentalists aren't your friend. You should be on our side." But what the black community is seeing is white people coming into the community wanting something again.

Cherry: I want to change the subject a little, because now I hear the words homosexual, gay and lesbian. Those aren't words I used coming up. In my neighborhood there was cloakings and bulldaggers. Mama's boys, sis-

sies, punks, faggots. I never heard the word lesbian till they integrated the schools and I got to be around white kids.

Pat: I don't object to the word lesbian, I just don't happen to use it. It's just that it's another white identified word, from the Isle of Lesbos. I don't think that my people were from there. Dyke works. Also in terms of the derogatory, it works to claim it, and not to have to claim something that is outside of me. Language is very very important, in how we frame ourselves.

Badili: You have the right to name yourself, to determine those values. That's the thing, not that we as African-Americans need to separate, but we definitely need to self-determine, and to stake our claim in terms of who we are and our place and role in society. It gets back to people trying to put a cloak of invisibility over you, and if you don't struggle then it's accepted. I don't want to be invisible.

Craig: That cloak that's put over us, in a lot of ways it hurts most when it's coming from our own.

Wendi: Say it.

Craig: For me, it's like the old cliché "there's a thin line between love and hate." The intimacy that you have with your own community leaves you open for more damage. I don't think that black folks are necessarily more homophobic than white folks are. We are very verbal people, we're definitely from an oral tradition, and so you have things being called out. When a white gay person is in the midst of some black folks, well, they're white. But with us, it's a more pointed hatred, a more pointed hostility. And it's bordering on love, because what it's saying is, when I call you a faggot and I send my boys to beat your ass just because you're walking down the street, that's me saying that you are mine and I don't like you that way. Because you're mine."

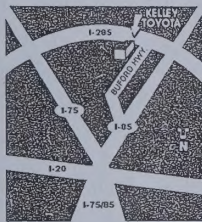
Next week the group discusses leadership in the black gay community, AIDS and the myth of masculinity.

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Twenty-one Atlanta AIDS service agencies have been identified as recipients of

...an agency targeted to blacks that has received Ryan White money since 1993 didn't make the list this year, and its director is crying foul.

Chick said a review committee deemed AESM's grant application this year was "not strong enough" to receive funding. One
➤ Continued on Page 13

Atlanta's AIDS Education & Services for Minorities, headed up by Rudy Carn, has asked federal officials to intervene after the agency was cut from Atlanta's Ryan White funding.

Rustin Project to connect minority gays with non-gay progressive groups

by DAVID GOLDMAN

Seeking to address the "disconnect between gay organizers and non-gay progressive would-be allies," Southerners on New Ground has announced its Bayard Rustin Project.

"The overall goal is about helping to further develop and strengthen people of color LGBT groups and white groups doing anti-racism work," said Craig Washington, SONG co-director.

"It takes more than just doing a workshop on how the issues are connected. People learn and increase their appreciation when they actually walk the talk."

The project's first phase is SONG's "Higher Ground 2000" conference for "lesbian, two-spirited, transgendered, gay, bisexual, same-gender-loving people of color."

The conference takes place Feb. 25-27 at Gulfside Assembly Center in Waveland, Miss. Details for a women's conference will be announced in April, Washington said.

The project's goals, Washington said, are:

- encouraging and supporting organizing efforts by LGBT people of color;

- linking Southern progressive groups overall; conducting intensive anti-racism workshops within white organizations; developing action plans to address racism within organizations and communities; developing educational materials on homophobia and racism; raising awareness of the civil rights movement and the

role of gay people in it; and

- developing relationships between LGBT organizations of color and the non-LGBT people of color entities within their ethnic communities.

"We want to start going out to different states throughout the Southeast," Washington said. "We will identify a number of different states each year, depending on our capacity."

In those states, Washington said, SONG will "identify key organizers and begin having conversations with them" to "identify what their experiences are, and what their challenges are in doing this work."

"We will do some training with them to help further their understanding around the connection of issues," he said.

Ideally, these meetings would be the basis for long-term relationships, Washington said, adding that follow-up will be a key part of the process. After the initial contacts, SONG hopes to convene the activists to share their experiences.

"This is not only about training people or skills-building, but also leadership development, bonding, overall healing and rejuvenation," Washington said.

Washington declined to list the LGBT people of color groups or the non-gay progressive groups SONG would target, though he said the latter would likely include the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery and the Highlander Research & Education Center in New Market, Tenn.

"With Highlander's commitment to a multi-issue, multi-racial approach to things, we would absolutely be delighted to be involved," said Suzanne Pharr.

Pharr, a long-time lesbian activist, was recently appointed director of



Civil rights leader Bayard Rustin

Highlander—the first woman and the first gay person to hold the office in the progressive center's 68-year history.

As one of the founders of SONG, Pharr helped develop the Bayard Rustin Project.

"We also want to have an actual education [and] fund-raising drive to create a tangible tribute to Bayard Rustin," Washington said. The memorial may take the form of a quilt commissioned from an artist.

Rustin, a close aide to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was instrumental in planning the historic 1963 March on Washington. But because he was openly gay, he was kept in the background at the event, and some accounts of the movement have minimized his contributions.

SONG was founded by black and white Southern lesbians to help integrate work against racism, sexism and economic injustice into gay organizing efforts and to work against homophobia in the progressive movement in the South.

Black gay confab set for Chicago

The 13th annual national Black Lesbian & Gay Leadership Conference will convene in Chicago next weekend, Feb. 17-20. The conference theme is "Healing & Rebuilding for the New Millennium."

The gathering will include sessions on "Identifying the Challenges," "Creating a Community Agenda," "Visioning a New Leadership Forum" and "Alignment on Moving Forward."

"This is an extraordinary time of change, challenge and opportunity for black lesbians and gays—changes in the health landscape, in politics and in economics require that we take a step back and plan for our collective future," said Alvan Quamina, executive director.

"This conference provides a critical opportunity for doing that important organizational and community work," Quamina said.

The conference will feature entertainment and social gatherings, too, including Chicago's African-American

LesBiGayTrans Performance Ensemble, a talent show with local and national performers, an awards reception recognizing individuals and organizations for their work in the black gay community, and a luncheon on Sunday.

INFO

Black Lesbian & Gay Leadership Conference

Feb. 17-20

Westin Hotel, Michigan Ave.

510-302-0930

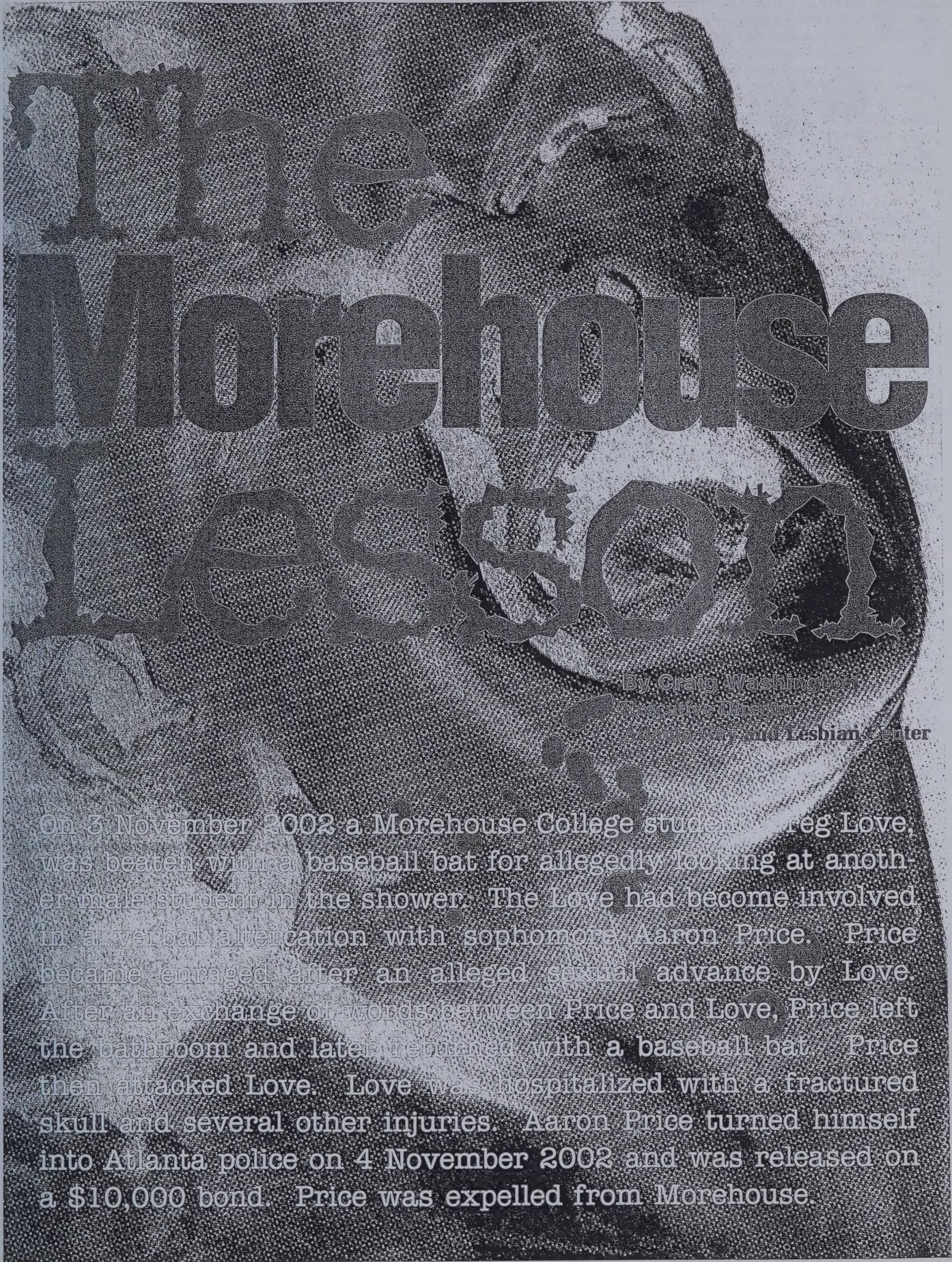
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The Morehouse Lesson

By Craig Washington
Executive Director
Alpha Phi Alpha and Lesbian Center

On 3 November 2002 a Morehouse College student, Greg Love, was beaten with a baseball bat for allegedly looking at another male student in the shower. The Love had become involved in a verbal altercation with sophomore Aaron Price. Price became enraged after an alleged sexual advance by Love. After an exchange of words between Price and Love, Price left the bathroom and later returned with a baseball bat. Price then attacked Love. Love was hospitalized with a fractured skull and several other injuries. Aaron Price turned himself into Atlanta police on 4 November 2002 and was released on a \$10,000 bond. Price was expelled from Morehouse.

Since the November anti-gay beating at Morehouse College, one of the most revered black academic institutions in the nation has become the focus of national scrutiny. Were it not for the media alert by the ad hoc committee of organizers and students known as ASSEFA (African Americans for a Safe Space for All), this attack (and several precedents) might have remained campus folklore. Even after DA Paul Howard announced that he would prosecute the attack as a hate crime, President Massey has yet to admit there has been a history of on-campus anti-gay abuse and that this crime was motivated by the perception that the victim was homosexual. Several factors may have contributed to his silences. Like most private schools, Morehouse would never voluntarily air its soiled linens. The association between Morehouse and homosexuality has been rumored for decades. But Morehouse administrators have rarely if ever publicly acknowledged its gay students, and it is after all a black private school. Like any prestigious academy, Morehouse values dearly its public image. It is a model historically black college who has given the world some of its most celebrated leaders and scholars. It prides itself on maintaining standards of academic excellence but its true mark of distinction is the sense of decorum and institutional loyalty instilled in generations of young men. The fabled "Morehouse man" is an enduring symbol of black male excellence that reflects traditional African American values and the behavior codes used to uphold them.

Sexuality in general and certainly homosexuality specifically, confound those codes that attempt to prescribe proper heterosexual behavior and prohibit improper heterosexual and all non-hetero sexuality and identity. The emergence of contemporary black male homosexual identities and culture is forcing all-black institutions to reexamine rigid norms of gender propriety and the related constructs of manhood. Increasingly many of those whom may not use the term "gay" to self-identify and are not ashamed of their sexuality are constructing self-affirming oases within these black spaces. This is what is happening at Morehouse College, which for the first time in its history now has an official gay student organization "Safe Space". As more black homosexuals, particularly youth, live their lives openly amongst other black people, more hetero black folks have had to interrogate or even deconstruct their own deeply ingrained biases. This eruption, this fairly new assertion of self-legitimized non-heterosexuals has also met with widespread resistance. Many straight Morehouse men resent the challenges to their heterosexual privilege that are presented by gays and women who will not be dominated, who will not stay in their place. Greg Love was perceived as not staying in his place. His alleged gaze at another man's naked body traverses the very boundaries that many heterosexual men feel entitled to cross when they openly glare at a Spelman student's behind. Yet because the gaze is unwanted (and/or socially opprobrious) and does not gratify heterosexual desire, it is a violation for which the gazer must be punished.

While black people may have traditionally embraced gays and lesbians among them, public dialogue about homosexuality arouses deep-seeded cultural anxieties. Although gays and lesbians have gained more acceptance over the last 20 years, non-heterosexual desire, behavior and identity are still heavily stigmatized throughout our society. Black people's self-consciousness about our image and the stalwart reluctance to air the proverbial dirty laundry (misogyny, sexual abuse) are partially rooted in the racism we have internalized. As with most Americans, we are further troubled by the fluid nature of sexuality, which often flouts the neat categories we've imposed to contain it. If student violence is a coffee spill on the cuff, troublesome but non-threatening, then homosexuality is a semen stain on the dress (or trousers), loaded with indictment, buried deep down in the basket.

The ensuing publicity has facilitated an abrupt "outing" of this institution, a public confirmation of the rumor that was more than "just a rumor". And to the extent that is a black institution, our community has been "outed", this time not by disease, but rather sexuality itself and the violence deployed to suppress it. As long as the young gay man stays in the closet, the family can sustain a self-perception of normalcy. His sexuality is not a problem for anyone else but him, the closet his cross to bear alone, the price he must pay for acceptance. Once he is out, the family must then speak to what had been known but resolutely unspoken, to deal with emotions that had been placated by denial. The greater family of black community is being called to come to terms with society's growing acceptance of gays and lesbians, the emergence of openly gay black people, and its widely varied beliefs and attitudes about homosexuality.

Many blacks who face racism daily are slow to confess the privileges they derive and the oppression they wield or tolerate within their own communities. Some black men who are well versed in their analysis of racism often do not recognize their own sexism and how black women are subjugated by it. Black heterosexual women may demonstrate an understanding of both racism and sexism and yet disclaim the parallel elements that comprise homophobia. People find it difficult to prioritize forms of oppression that do not directly affect them. More to the point, we often resist admitting to the privileges we access through our membership in certain "groups" i.e., whites, men, heterosexuals, rich people, Christians. It is easier to cite our status as victims as it incurs little if any responsibility.

As categories of identity, race and sexual orientation are in many ways dissimilar. Yet the correlative oppressions that target the respective minorities of these categories (black people and gays) have similar dynamics. Racism and homophobia are reinforced by stereotyping (black men are criminals/gays are child molesters) and blaming the victim (Emmet Till shouldn't have eyeballed a white woman/Greg Love shouldn't have eyeballed another man). The responses from several blacks emulate oppressor group behavior. For instance a Spelman student recently informed me of widespread speculation that Love physically harassed Aaron Price, thereby instigating the attack. Given that there is no record of Love touching Price, it is highly likely that this rumor was inspired by an unarticulated desire to justify the crime. Just as many white people rush to blame black victims for being brutalized by racist police, and many men question what the rape victim was doing at her rapist's hotel room anyway, several heterosexuals are searching for any culpability they can pin on Love. If the act is warranted and thus not a crime, or if the motivation is refuted, then group members (whites/men/heterosexuals) do not have to admit to their own biases and the power they have to enforce them.

It is a reasonable assumption that if a black male student at, say, Emory University was beaten with a bat for looking at a white female student, several major black social justice organizations would be holding press conferences, marches and demonstrations all up and down that campus. No local or national non-gay black organizations have been quoted denouncing the specific nature of this attack. President Massey recently announced that he had convened a "blue ribbon panel" to address diversity issues. This panel has only one openly gay member, noted Harvard professor Peter Gomes, who wrote "The Good Book" which critiques how the Bible is used to address social issues. Imagine how enraged many blacks would be if a white college (prompted by the racist attack of a black student) assembled a panel to address racism and included only one black person. Although he stated his "willingness to engage gay and lesbian organizations," Massey has not returned any phone calls from the Atlanta Gay and Lesbian Center or ASSEFA and no local black gays or lesbians were asked to serve on the panel.

Hopefully Morehouse and the black community at large will learn from the lessons this experience offers. We who strive for social justice for all and not only our constituency cannot remain bound by the constraints of our comfort zones. Black people have to risk stepping into uncharted territory and look past oppression hierarchies ("your blues ain't as bad as mine") that blur the common vision of the disenfranchised. When a colleague advised me to be patient with Morehouse since "they were not prepared to deal with this," I recalled how often freedom fighters were cautioned to "go slow" forty years ago. As with many of life's demands, social change does not wait for us to be prepared to fight for it. This incident is a calling and we must muster the courage to look first inward and unload the prejudice that infects us as individuals and as a society, right now. If civil rights workers had waited until blacks were prepared to fight for freedom, and whites were prepared to confront racism, many of us might still be riding at the back of the bus. b

Mr. Washington was born and lovingly raised by Anna and Leon Washington in Queens, New York and has lived in Atlanta for 10 years. His writings have been published in Arise, Clickue, Southern Voice, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution and Venus Magazine. He currently serves as executive director for the Atlanta Gay and Lesbian Center and may be reached at cwash360@cs.com.



RICH ADDICKS / Staff

March of pride

Dana Mitchell chants "equal rights and justice" Monday during the sixth annual Atlanta Black Pride March downtown. The event, which started at the Martin Luther King Jr. Center and ended at the Capitol, was part of Atlanta Black Gay Pride Weekend.

LAW & ORDER

Leader of drug program killed

A man who ran a local 12-step program for drug addicts was gunned down in DeKalb County, authorities said.

Around 2:20 a.m. Sunday, a passer-by called 911 after finding a body in the parking lot of a strip mall at 1291 Columbia Drive in Decatur, DeKalb police spokesman Herschel Grangent said. The victim, later identified as Leroy Daniel, 63, was taken to DeKalb Medical Center, where he was pronounced dead. Daniel, a driver for Carey Limousine, ran a nonprofit 12-step program at the shopping plaza.

His family told police that he had gone to the program's office to retrieve some personal items.

Anyone with information is asked to call police at 404-294-2570.

FULTON COUNTY Driver dies trying

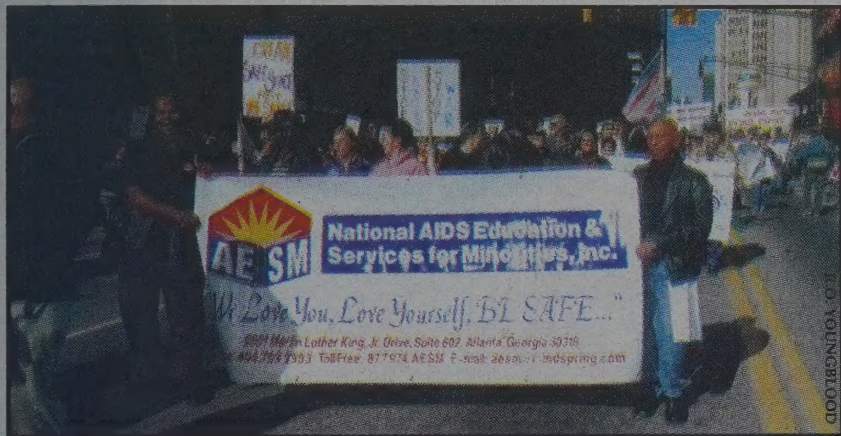
The woman, whose name was withheld until relatives were notified, clipped a car and

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Gays celebrate MLK Jr. Day



As in past years, a vibrant multi-racial gay contingent joined in Monday's march through downtown Atlanta celebrating the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr. Prior to the march, Atlanta's gay and lesbian center hosted a first annual breakfast bringing together gay, lesbian, and transgender leaders in celebration of the holiday honoring the slain civil rights leader. "We wanted to give people an opportunity to have more time together, to get to know each other just a little bit more in setting that was social — that wasn't focused on a meeting or an agenda," said Craig Washington, director of the Center. The breakfast hosted about 80 people and received support from black civil rights leaders in Atlanta, Washington said.

eight in the Atlanta — and political observers say gay politicians may feel increased pressure because of the higher scrutiny they receive.

Specific charges denied

McCall has refused to discuss further details of the charges brought against Fowler, but the mayor offered more comment on the charges this week. He said he has retained an attorney, but declined to name that person.

Speaking specifically about a few of the accusations, Fowler said he has not used city money to repair his personal car.

"I have driven city vehicles. We have them to drive as needed and I have logs of everywhere I've been," Fowler said. "The city cars have been repaired in the process."

Fowler also said the parade registration fees brought into question were for him and other Council members to ride in the Atlanta Pride parade, and that the money came from the mayor's discretionary fund.

Ken Carroll, a Pine Lake resident and the vice president of the Pine Lake Association of Involved Neighbors, said Fowler misled residents after a piece of land was donated to the city to be used as park space.

and the mediation process. While Denny said she believes that proves the majority of people in Pine Lake are on Fowler's side, she added the controversy has created a divide among city residents.

Fowler agreed, saying he has heard from supporters who feel the charges aren't justified. "I've been out walking through the city, and people are coming up to me going 'Hang with this, we support you, this is absolutely a witch hunt,'" he said.

Carroll painted a less dramatic picture of the divisive results of the controversy.

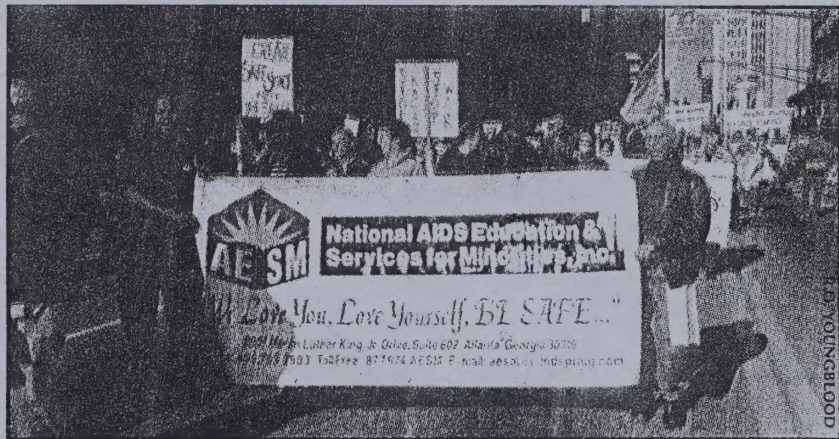
"The call from a majority of the citizens was that we would much rather have to go through this little bit of bad press, and save our city from financial bankruptcy, than just hide it and hope that by the next election the mayor hadn't completely bankrupted us," he said.

Sexual orientation an issue?

Carroll and other Pine Lake residents said they don't believe Fowler's sexual orientation has anything to do with the allegations, because the town has many gay residents and is known for being gay-friendly. Fowler has declined comment on the issue.

Around the country, several high-profile

Gays celebrate MLK Jr. Day



As in past years, a vibrant multi-racial gay contingent joined in Monday's march through downtown Atlanta celebrating the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr. Prior to the march, Atlanta's gay and lesbian center hosted a first annual breakfast bringing together gay, lesbian, and transgender leaders in celebration of the holiday honoring the slain civil rights leader. "We wanted to give people an opportunity to have more time together, to get to know each other just a little bit more in setting that was social — that wasn't focused on a meeting or an agenda," said Craig Washington, director of the Center. The breakfast hosted about 80 people and received support from black civil rights leaders in Atlanta, Washington said.

Lambda Legal seeks attorney for Atlanta office

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Christopher Seely

MORE INFO

Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund

Send résumé, writing sample, and letter to:

Ruth E. Harlow, legal director

Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund

1201 Wall St. Suite 1500

MORE INFO

MLK March Meeting

Every Thursday, 6 p.m.

SCLC Women's Building

328 Auburn Ave.

404-584-0303

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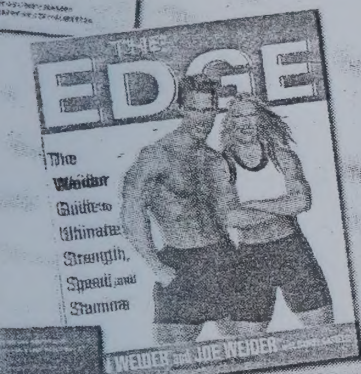
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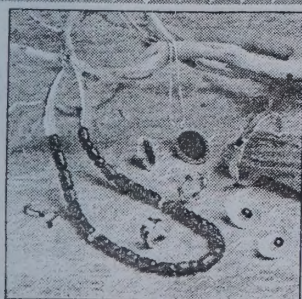
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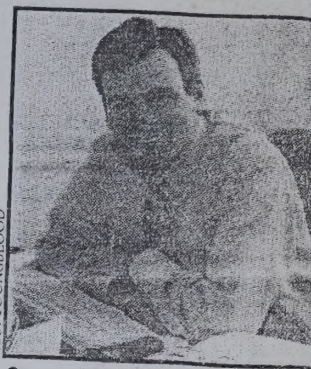
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Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Monday, Jan. 21

- Pre-march Brunch, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.
The Center
159 Ralph McGill Blvd., Suite 600
Atlanta, GA 30308
404-523-7500
- MLK March, 1 p.m.
Gay groups meet at the corner of Peachtree and Ellis streets
- After March Rally
Martin Luther King Jr. Center
449 Auburn Ave., NE
Atlanta, GA 30312
404-526-8900
info@thekingcenter.org

Students seek community input for 'Gay Prom'

DECATUR — Two local Atlanta young people are doing their best to give gay teens something to look forward to this spring — their very own prom. A planning meeting for a proposed "Gay Prom" will be held Jan. 29 at YouthPride, a gay youth organization. High school students Beatrice Sullivan and a friend said they came up with the idea as they began preparing for their own school proms. "Seeing how it was difficult to be a sexual minority and prepare for a traditional prom, we thought how much more fun it would be to organize an event especially for 'family,'" said Sullivan, who attends Southwest DeKalb High. A tentative date of May 18 has been set for the prom but a location has not been selected. The prom will be open to ages 16-23 with a \$25 ticket price. Donations and sponsors from the community are being accepted to help assist with food, space, entertainment, printing and advertising.

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Gay Prom planning meeting

Jan. 29, 7 p.m.
YouthPride
302 E. Howard Ave.
Decatur, GA 30030
404-378-6620

AIDS seminar focuses on wide range of topics

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AIDS 101 Seminar

Jan. 26, 8:45 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Morris Brown College
643 Martin Luther King Jr.
Drive
Atlanta, GA 30314
Pre-registration: \$20
Contact AID Atlanta to register
404-870-7700

atlanta/ga. news

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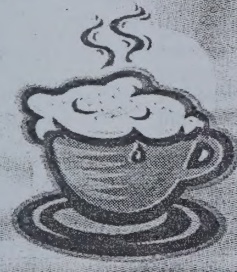
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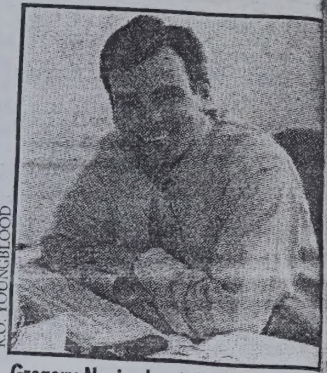
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Imagine a World Without AIDS

By Danielle Ofri

THE beginning of the end of AIDS? The article with that title jumped out at me last week, as I did my weekly table-of-contents scan of The New England Journal of Medicine. I wasn't prepared for the flood of emotion that overcame me. The beginning of the end? Could it really be?

For those of us who did our medical training in the late '80s and early '90s, AIDS saturated our lives. The whole era had a medieval feel, with visceral suffering and human decimation all around. Death was vivid, brutal and omnipresent.

Bellevue Hospital, where I trained, was one of those city hospitals that felt like ground zero for the plague. Every third admission seemed to be a patient in his mid-20s who looked as if he'd arrived from Dachau or Biafra, with nary a T-cell to his name. Horrific Kaposi's sarcoma ulcerated these patients' bodies. P.C.P., a brutal form of pneumonia, strangled their breathing. Fevers and infections plundered every organ system. What few defenses their bodies mustered were pummeled into insignificance.

The utter relentlessness of the disease pummeled the doctors-in-training as well. It felt as if we were slogging knee-deep in death, with a horizon that was a monochrome of despair. Witnessing your own generation dying off is not for the faint of heart.

The 17 West AIDS ward in Bellevue was always full to capacity, so H.I.V. patients overflowed into the general medical wards, and of course swamped the prison ward, the tuberculosis ward, the pediatric ward and the emergency room. We even had a "spill-over" ward, 12 East, reserved for the "actively dying." The hospital had carved out a ward of private rooms — otherwise unheard-of in a city hospital — so that these patients could have a modicum of privacy in their final days. Needless to say, 12 East was also full to capacity, with a line of patients waiting for a room to "open up."

If you'd grabbed a random intern toward the end of my residency in 1995, and asked her if she could envision the headline "The Beginning of the End of

Danielle Ofri, an associate professor at New York University School of Medicine, is the editor of the Bellevue Literary Review and the author, most recently, of "Medicine in Translation: Journeys With My Patients."

AIDS" in less than 20 years, she would have simply stared uncomprehendingly at you with bleary eyes. More than 50,000 Americans died of AIDS that year. By 2009, the number had edged under 20,000.

In the worlds of both medicine and metaphor, the narrative arc of AIDS has almost no peer. The transformation from hopelessness to pragmatic optimism is — scientifically speaking — nothing short of miraculous. Potent combinations of antiviral medications that brought patients off their deathbeds and back to life, viral load testing

search.

The staggering progress of these past two decades leaves me breathless, and to be honest, almost teary-eyed. For nearly every other category of disease that afflicts my patients, the treatments are largely the same as when I was an intern. Yes, we have fancier stents for our cardiac patients, and more targeted chemotherapy for our cancer patients, but the overall paradigms have shifted only incrementally.

H.I.V. has been easier to target, in part, because it is caused by a single infectious agent — as opposed to the di-

verse factors that influence cardiovascular disease and cancer. And then there was the avalanche of resources and the galvanizing of public activism that served to concentrate scientific efforts in a manner never seen before. By no means do I wish to belittle the impressive advances in other fields of medicine, but our oncology wards and cardiac wards still do a brisk business.

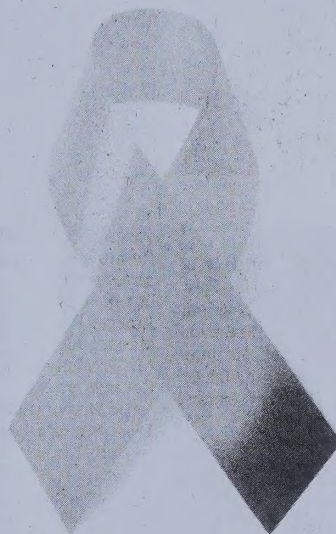
AIDS patients in the hospital are a rarity now — they are more likely to be admitted for an ulcer or a heart attack than for an H.I.V.-related illness. The overwhelming majority receive their medical care in outpatient settings, like everyone else who is living with a disease rather than dying of a disease. AIDS has settled in next to hypertension and diabetes as one of those chronic conditions that patients deal with over the course of a lifetime.

"Over the course of a lifetime." Now there's a concept we never thought about back then.

There is still a long way to go, of course. The 19th annual International AIDS Conference just ended on Friday, and no one is underestimating the gravity of the challenges that remain, particularly in developing countries. But to even contemplate, however tentatively, the beginning of the end is something that my peers and I never imagined happening in our lifetimes.

I often think about grim days we spent doing rounds on 17 West and 12 East. I remember the slow and tortured deaths of our patients, their emaciated bodies disintegrating into nothingness before our eyes. More tears were shed on those wards than any I've worked in since.

And what happened? The 17 West AIDS ward became a regular medical ward. The 12 East dying ward was turned into offices. And then, this month, the inpatient AIDS service at Bellevue closed down entirely. If that doesn't signify the beginning of the end, I don't know what does. □

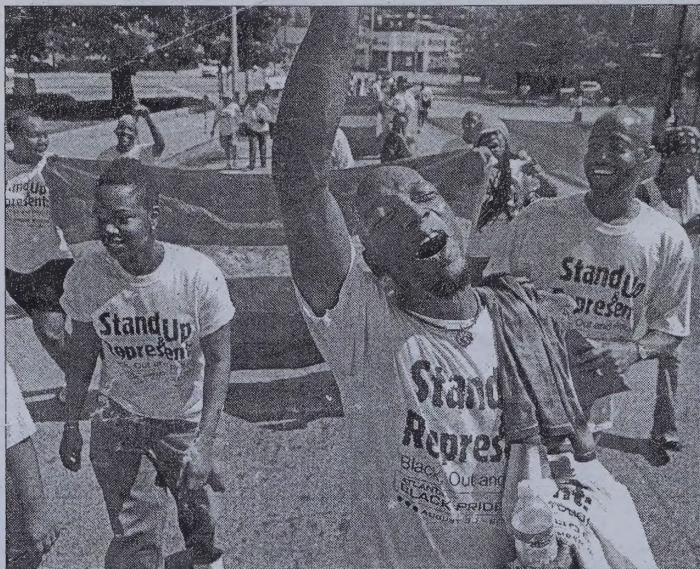


RODRIGO CORRAL

A long way from the darkest days at Bellevue Hospital.

and H.I.V. genotyping that helped tailor treatment regimens, screening of the blood supply, aggressive public health campaigns, prevention of maternal-fetal transmission — we could hardly have envisioned the pace of development.

After years of disappointments, H.I.V. vaccine research is heating up again, as breakthroughs in the understanding of H.I.V. immunology have identified nearly two dozen potential vaccine candidates. The apparent H.I.V. cure as a result of a bone-marrow transplant in a man known as the "Berlin patient" has stimulated tantalizing gene therapy re-



RICH ADDICKS / Staff

March of pride

Dana Mitchell chants "equal rights and justice" Monday during the sixth annual Atlanta Black Pride March downtown. The event, which started at the Martin Luther King Jr. Center and ended at the Capitol, was part of Atlanta Black Gay Pride Weekend.

LAW & ORDER

Leader of drug program killed

A man who ran a local 12-step program for drug addicts was gunned down in DeKalb County, authorities said.

Around 2:20 a.m. Sunday, a passer-by called 911 after finding a body in the parking lot of a strip mall at 1291 Columbia Drive in Decatur, DeKalb police spokesman Herschel Grangent said. The victim, later identified as Leroy Daniel, 63, was taken to DeKalb Medical Center, where he was pronounced dead. Daniel, a driver for Carey Limousine, ran a nonprofit 12-step program at the shopping plaza.

His family told police that he had gone to the program's office to retrieve some personal items.

Anyone with information is asked to call police at 404-294-2570.

FULTON COUNTY Driver dies trying

The woman, whose name was withheld until relatives were notified, clipped a car and

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